News story: ‘Eco Innovators’: government calls on next generation to design the future of transport

- government launches competition for young people to design electric vehicle chargepoints of the future
- ‘Eco Innovators’ competition aims to inspire young people to use their creative and engineering skills
- winners will have their designs made into real-life prototypes supported by industry experts

The government has today (21 May 2019) launched a competition for 7 to 19 year olds to design the electric vehicle chargepoints of the future, inspiring the next generation of engineers – a key aim of the modern Industrial Strategy.

The ‘Eco Innovators’ competition – announced by Science Minister Chris Skidmore at the launch of the Engineering: Take a Closer Look campaign, a legacy project of the hugely successful Year of Engineering campaign – calls on students to submit creative designs for public electric vehicle chargepoints, an increasingly recognisable and critical part of UK streets.

The competition aims to encourage budding innovators, engineers and artists to learn more about the vital engineering sector and zero-emission transport. Winners of each of the 2 age categories will have their winning designs made into real-life prototypes with support from industry experts and their chargepoint displayed at the Electric Vehicle Experience Centre in Milton Keynes.

Future of Mobility Minister, Jesse Norman, said:

> The government’s ambition is for the UK to have one of the best charging infrastructure networks in the world for electric vehicles, as we move towards a zero emission future.
>
> I am delighted to be one of the judges of this terrific competition. We will be looking for really imaginative chargepoint designs that can play a big practical role in encouraging more people to buy and drive electric vehicles.

Nusrat Ghani, 2018 Year of Engineering Minister, said:

> It’s an exciting time for engineering and I’ve seen first-hand the impact the Year of Engineering campaign has had, inspiring young people from all backgrounds into careers across the sector.

> The ‘Eco Innovators’ competition encourages young people to see engineering as an exciting and creative career path, helping them shape the world around them and make a real difference.

Science and Innovation Minister Chris Skidmore said:

> The UK has an extraordinary engineering history, from Ada Lovelace’s instrumental role in developing the first computer to Frank Whittle inventing the turbojet engine. I want our future to be as innovative as our past and to do that we must boost STEM skills across the country.
>
> The Engineering: Take a Closer Look campaign will play a crucial role in inspiring the next generation. I am proud to be leading on this important campaign, as we seek to upskill people to meet the challenges of tomorrow through our modern Industrial Strategy.

The submissions to the competition will be judged by a panel from organisations including the RAC Foundation, the National Grid, the National Transport Design Centre, Design Council, Living Streets, EV Thank You, the Office for Low Emission Vehicles and the minister, Jesse Norman.

As outlined in the Road to Zero Strategy, the government is investing £1.5 billion to support the transition to greener transport, aiming to end the sale of new conventional diesel and petrol-fuelled cars and vans by 2040.

Through the modern Industrial Strategy, the government aims to inspire the next generation of engineers who will meet the Grand Challenges of the future, identifying how low-carbon, sustainable transport can play a key role in supporting the global transition to a cleaner, greener economy. Engineering: Take a Closer Look will continue to encourage young people from different backgrounds into considering a career in engineering and support the delivery of the high-skilled jobs of the future.

The ‘Eco Innovators’ competition is open to students from 21 May 2019, via www.gov.uk/engineeringcloserlook. The competition closes at 18 October 2019. The winning entries will be announced shortly thereafter.